

PARTICIPANT'S HANDBOOK

CITY OF ST. LOUIS FAMILY DRUG COURT

Mission Statement of the St. Louis Family Drug Court

The Family Drug Court seeks to ensure child safety by focusing on healthy and sober parenting with a goal of family reunification or other permanency for the child.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the City of St. Louis Family Drug Court Program. Family Drug Court is a court-supervised drug treatment program for non-violent individuals with a drug abuse problem. This handbook is designed to answer your questions and concerns about Family Drug Court, provide overall information about the program, and detail what is expected of you as a participant. You will easily understand the clear and concise rules. Drug Court is a system in which choices are presented to you. We encourage you to take control of your own life and reach abstinence from alcohol and other drugs and enter recovery. Share this handbook with your family and friends.

Candidates for Family Drug Court have children placed in foster care and are specially chosen by the Family Drug Court Team based on certain guidelines. The **Family Drug Court Team** is under the direction of the **Drug Court Commissioner**. Members of the Family Drug Court Team include the Commissioner, Drug Court Administrator, Circuit Attorney, Division of Family Services case managers, Guardian Ad Litem, attorneys for the parents and child and deputy juvenile officer and Division of Family Services, and a treatment program representative.

Participation in Family Drug Court is voluntary. The program length is determined by each participant's individual progress, but is at least eleven (11) months. You signed a **contract** with Family Drug Court agreeing to comply with program requirements. As a participant, you will be expected to follow the instructions given by the Commissioner, to comply with the treatment plan developed for you, and to respect all members of the team. Participation includes regular court appearances, following your court ordered treatment plan, drug testing, counseling (family, individual and group), family support team meetings, and attendance at self-help meetings (Narcotics Anonymous, Alcoholics Anonymous or Marijuana Anonymous). Participants may also be assisted with education and skills assessments, referrals for vocational training, education and/or job placement services, mental health assessments, etc.

Your privacy is respected in Family Drug Court. We are bound to make every effort to protect your identity and maintain **confidentiality** about your program. However, upon entry into Family Drug Court, you signed a **Consent to Release Information** which gives the Court permission to obtain treatment information from your treatment provider and allows us to talk with your provider about your progress in the program without your being present. We also expect you to allow us to access medical and other records of care and service to you (as necessary and with your full knowledge) that may impact your participation.

If your child remains in foster care for 12 months, state and federal laws require the court to make a permanent plan for your child. If you complete your program, the plan would be reunification. **If you drop out** and/or do not complete your program, your child's permanent plan could be **termination of your parental rights and adoption**, or

guardianship with a relative, or a planned permanent living arrangement for your child. According to current laws, long term foster care is no longer considered a permanent plan. The court believes that you can succeed on your journey to a clean and sober life and reunification with your child(ren).

For those with criminal charges, upon completion of the program, the **Circuit Attorney will drop the case** against all successful "graduates" and will not prosecute this case in the future. **Beware, however, that if you fail the program** and thereafter appear before a judge for sentencing on your case, Missouri law provides that your sentencing judge may consider the reason(s) you were terminated from Family Drug Court.

Working together, the St. Louis Family Drug Court Team hopes to see positive changes in your life as a result of this program. We believe that if you trust our process, you will become clean and sober, have improved health and a stable lifestyle, obtain or improve your employment and/or further your education, develop new and positive relationships with family and friends, rejoin your community as a productive member and find happiness in **your recovery and your new life! Our goal is to help you stop using drugs in order to achieve safety and permanency for your children.**

II. PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

A. DRUG TESTING

You will be drug tested throughout the entire program at least once per week and often more. Testing will be on a **random basis** and may be called **any day of the week**.

On the day you enter Drug Court, you will be assigned a **color**. You must call the drug testing telephone number, **314-992-0858**, every day to find out if your color is called and you are to test that day. You must call every morning, seven days a week, including holidays. When you call, you will get a recording which will provide you with the color(s) for that day. Listen to the complete recorded message.

The primary site for urine drops is **Global Drug Testing, 1720 Olive Street, (231-8029)** in downtown St. Louis. If your color is called, you must report to Global on that day between the **hours of 7:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m.** only.

B. COURT APPEARANCES

As a Family Drug Court participant, you will be required to appear in court on a regular basis. At each appearance, the Commissioner will be given a report prepared by your case manager about your progress. The report will include drug test results, attendance at self-help meetings, participation in treatment, successes and/or problems you are having, your health, your attitude and so forth. The Commissioner may ask you questions about your progress and discuss any problems you have been experiencing.

If you are doing well, you will be called first on the docket and encouraged to continue working with your treatment team toward graduation. You may also be rewarded with credits toward your fees, movie tickets, decreased court appearances, etc.

If you are not doing well, the Commissioner will discuss this with you and determine any further action that needs to be taken. There are many responses to your program violations and problems the Commissioner may make ranging from community service to termination from the program.

If you cannot appear in court as scheduled, you must notify your case manager as soon as possible in order to get permission from the Commissioner. **Unexcused failure to appear** in court on the date and time you are scheduled is a crime for those of you with criminal cases and will result in a warrant's being issued for your arrest.

C. FEES

There is a **\$100.00** Drug Court fee that you must pay in order to graduate. Payments are to be made directly to the clerk/cashier in Room _____. The cashier will give you a receipt to show to the Commissioner each time you make a payment. Try to pay a small amount (at least \$5.00) every time you come to court.

D. SUPPORT OF YOUR CHILD

You will be asked to provide financial support for your child in foster care according to your ability to pay.

E. CASE MANAGER

Every participant will be assigned a case manager from the Division of Family Services. You are to schedule regular appointments with your case manager as directed by your case manager. You are expected to be on time. Your case manager will give continuous updates to the Drug Court Commissioner and Team about your progress. The case manager will make home visits and check in with your work place, your treatment program, your physician, and any other persons involved in working with you while you are in Family Drug Court. Your case manager will schedule family support team meetings and visits between you and your child(ren).

F. TREATMENT

Every Family Drug Court participant will be assessed. Then a **treatment plan** will be developed by your treatment team. This plan will be based on a team approach using the resources of a network of service providers in the City of St. Louis and State of Missouri. The plan will act as a guide for you through treatment and will be up-dated as you progress.

The treatment team will assess what level and intensity of treatment will best meet your needs and recommend to the Commissioner that you receive either detoxification, residential treatment or outpatient services. If you are admitted to a **residential treatment** program, your treatment plan will include the requirements of that program.

If you are not admitted into residential treatment, an **outpatient** program will be set up for you. This will include both **individual and group** substance abuse counseling. You must participate fully in both. Together they are designed to help you develop self-awareness, self-discipline and realize your self-worth. They include problem identification and alternative solutions.

G. SELF-HELP

Attendance at **12-step meetings** (Narcotics Anonymous, Marijuana Anonymous and/or Alcoholics Anonymous) is required **at least twice per week** throughout your entire Drug Court program. These meetings are a vitally important part of your recovery. You must provide written proof of attendance to your case manager before each court appearance.

You must also obtain a **sponsor** of your same sex. A sponsor is a 12-step group member with significant sobriety (at least one year), who assists you on a personal level with sobriety, personal problems, working the steps, etc. Ask at meetings for a temporary sponsor in the beginning.

H. VISITATION WITH YOUR CHILDREN

You will be required to see your children as ordered by the Court.

III. GENERAL DRUG COURT RULES

As a Drug Court participant, you will be required to abide by some basic rules:

1. Always tell the truth.

Overcoming alcohol or drug dependence is not easy, yet thousands of individuals do it every year with the help of others. Your success will take your best effort, including constant truthfulness on your part. Lies keep you alone, speaking only to yourself. The Family Drug Court Team will tell you the truth and will expect your truth in return, especially as follows:

- a. **Do not forge documents** such as N/A meeting attendance sheets.
Forgery is not only a lie, it is a crime.
- b. **Do not miss urine drops or attempt to subvert any urinalysis test in anyway.** Missed drops are considered dirty drops. Tampering with urine Specimens will not be tolerated. Both are dishonest.

2. Follow all Family Drug Court rules and orders.

3. Become and remain alcohol and drug free.

Sobriety is the primary focus of this program. Maintaining a drug free lifestyle is very important to your recovery process.

4. Avoid any establishment where the principle business is the sale of alcoholic beverages or illegal drugs or gambling.

Just as using alcohol and other drugs may become an addiction, gambling may become an addiction, also and is therefore not approved behavior for Drug Court participants.

5. Follow the treatment plan made for you by your counselor and attend all assigned treatment sessions including individual and group counseling, educational sessions and 12-step meetings.

If you are unable to attend a scheduled session, you must contact your treatment counselor in advance.

6. Report to your case manager as directed.

If you have any problems keeping a scheduled appointment, contact your case manager immediately. Do not just "drop in". You must inform your case manager of any changes in your address, telephone number, job or people living in your home within 48 hours of such change.

7. Take care of your child(ren).

You will be required to keep your children safe and free from abuse and/or neglect.

8. Attend and be on time to all Family Drug Court sessions, Family Support Team Meetings, and treatment.

Being late may mean that you miss counseling sessions and are considered "non-compliant". Contact your treatment counselor if there is a possibility that you may be late. The Commissioner may sanction you for being late to court. Additionally, it is very important that you attend all Family Support Team meetings. You will want to share your thoughts on all plans that effect you and your children.

9. Behave appropriately in court and at treatment.

- a. **Inappropriate physical and/or verbal behavior** will not be tolerated and may result in your termination from the program. Make NO threats toward other participants, counselors or Drug Court Team members nor behave in a violent or aggressive manner.
- b. **When you have physical custody of your child(ren), bring them to court.**
The Commissioner wants to see and talk with them.

- c. Do not bring **beepers or cell phones** to court.
- d. No **gum or food** is allowed in the courtroom.
- e. **Dress appropriately** in court and at treatment.
The sheriffs will require that you dress appropriately in the court building. This means wearing shirts, pants, dresses, etc. of reasonable length. No tank tops or clothing with drug or alcohol themes is acceptable. Gang attire is unacceptable. Sunglasses should not be worn inside without medical approval. Speak with your treatment team if you need assistance with clothing.

10. Obey all laws and pay outstanding traffic fines.

- a. Do NOT drive a vehicle without a valid **driver's license**.
- b. A **felony** arrest may result in your termination from Drug Court. Remember that drug use or sale is illegal.
- c. Take care of all outstanding cases you may have in **municipal courts**. You may find yourself locked up all over St. Louis County and City because you have been irresponsible there. Such a problem can ruin your Family Drug Court participation completely. If you need help, let your defense attorney and the Commissioner know the extent of your problem right away.

11. Do not travel away from St. Louis without permission from the Commissioner.

12. Avoid any person who possesses or uses illegal drugs.

13. Visit your child(ren) as required by the Family Drug Court team, support your Child(ren) financially and cooperate with the team in permanency planning.

The safety and welfare of your child(ren) is a primary concern of the Family Drug Court team. It is important that you develop a positive relationship with your child(ren), provide information about your child(ren) to the team, and provide proper support and a plan for their future.

14. Pay a \$100.00 Family Drug Court fee.

The fee to enter the Family Drug Court is \$100.00. You will be expected to pay \$5.00 each court appearance to reduce the amount owed. The Drug Court Commissioner may give you credits on your fee if you are doing well in the program.

IV. CONSEQUENCES OF BEHAVIOR

It is important for you to know what will happen when you do well and when you are non-compliant in Family Drug Court. This section is designed to let you know clearly

what the consequences of both your good and bad behaviors will be so that you know that **the choice is yours.**

A. INCENTIVES

When you consistently cooperate and participate in the Drug Court program, you may expect the Commissioner to recognize you, at her discretion, in one or more of the following ways:

1. Give you a credit of \$5.00 or more on your \$100.00 Drug Court fee.
2. Call you first on the docket.
3. Let you go to the next path.
4. Allow you privileges like travel out of town.
5. Reward you with movie tickets, grocery vouchers, etc.
6. Give you applause and praise in the courtroom.
7. Reduce your court appearances.

B. SANCTIONS

When you fail to comply with the Family Drug Court program, the Commissioner may, at her discretion, order one or more of the following sanctions:

PROGRAM REQUIREMENT NOT MET	SANCTION FOR NOT MEETING REQUIREMENT
1st missed drop	-4 hours community service
2d missed drop	-8 hours community service
3d missed drop	-weekend in jail*/or a fine
tampering with urine sample	-jail*/or a fine
missed case manager appointment	-4 hours community service
missed treatment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - make up treatment - increased treatment - increased self-help - workbook assignments - 1 hour community service for each session missed - lose time in path - jail* - termination
urine test is positive for drug(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - increased urine drops - increased self-help meetings - journaling - workbook assignments - increased outpatient treatment - change of outpatient treatment site - residential treatment

inappropriate behavior at treatment	- written apology - community service - jail* - termination
missed self-help meetings	-1 hour of community service for each missed meeting
leave residential treatment without permission	- warrant issued for your arrest* - sent back to residential - lose time in path - jail* - termination
missed court appearance	- warrant issued for your arrest - jail*/or a fine - termination
forging meeting or treatment attendance sheets	-Jail*/or a fine
new arrest	-possible termination depending on case

*applies to clients with criminal cases

The Family Drug Court Commissioner has the power to enter orders in your case that could include the following:

1. Removing your child(ren) from your custody and placing them in an alternative placement;
2. Ordering you to participate in treatment, which may include both in-patient and/or out-patient programs;
3. Restricting your contact with your children.

V. PATHS TOWARD GRADUATION

There are three Paths in the Family Drug Court program. Each must be completed in turn before you can "graduate".

A. PATH I

In Path I, you will be assigned a case manager. You will be assigned to a regular treatment program in the St. Louis Drug Court Treatment Network, an association formed specially to service Drug Court clients. Additional service needs will be identified based on your family's individual needs. In Path I, your problems and needs will be assessed and a treatment plan developed. **Path I lasts a minimum of three weeks.**

The **requirements** of Path I are as follows:

1. Attend assigned treatment.
2. Attend two self-help meetings weekly and get a sponsor.
3. Appear in court as ordered by the Commissioner (usually weekly).
4. See your case manager as directed by your case manager (usually weekly).
5. Call the drop line every day and give a urine sample for testing when your color is called.
6. Attend Family Support Team Meetings.
7. Visit and support your child(ren) while they are in out of home care.

The Family Drug Court Team must agree that you have met all of these requirements before you can move to the next path.

B. PATH II

Path II is your **primary treatment path**. Path II lasts a **minimum of four months**. You must be clean and sober and without major sanction (jail, fine or lost time in Path) in the program for the **last 8 weeks** in the path in order to move on to Path III. In Path II, your treatment plan will be updated by you and your counselor to identify your treatment goals and objectives. Counseling and meetings will focus on your problem areas and help you to identify ways of coping with stressful situations. The **requirements** of Path II are as follows:

1. Attend treatment (individual and group counseling).
2. Attend at least two self-help meetings each week.
3. Appear in court as ordered by the Commissioner (usually every other week).
4. Determine visitation schedule with your child(ren).
5. See your case manager as directed by the case manager.
6. Call the drop line every day and give a urine sample for testing when your color is called.
7. Make regular payments toward the \$100.00 Drug Court fee.
8. Maintain a sponsor and verify weekly contact.
9. Obtain or maintain employment and/or a training or a formal academic program.
10. Keep at least the last eight weeks in the path drug free and without major sanctions.
11. Prepare with your counselor, and submit to the Commissioner, a written Relapse Prevention Plan.
12. Attend Family Support Team Meetings
13. Visit and support your child(ren) while they are in out of home care.
14. Keep your child(ren) safe and free from abuse and neglect.

The Family Drug Court Team must agree that you have met all of these requirements, and that you have sufficient information and the proper attitude to support recovery, before you can move to the next path.

C. PATH III

Path III is an aftercare path. It is designed to address your on-going recovery needs including maintaining total abstinence from all drugs through relapse prevention. The goal is to support your return to the community as a productive and responsible parent. The focus will be on daily living skills. Path III lasts a **minimum of 6 months**, of which at least the **last 12 weeks must be free of drug use and without major sanctions**. Path III requirements are as follows:

1. Attend relapse prevention treatment as required.
2. Attend at least two self-help groups per week and maintain a sponsor.
3. Appear in court as ordered by the Commissioner (usually monthly).
4. Call the drop line every day and give a urine sample for testing when your color is called.
5. See your case manager as directed by your case manager.
6. Maintain employment or training or a formal academic program.
7. Maintain sobriety.
8. Pay all Drug Court fees (and any restitution owed).
9. Keep your child(ren) safe and free from abuse and neglect.
10. Establish a date for permanent reunification with your child(ren).

The Family Drug Court Team must agree that you have met all of these requirements and that you have sufficiently integrated the necessary information to support long-term recovery in order for you to GRADUATE FROM FAMILY DRUG COURT.

VI. IMPORTANT INFORMATION TO KEEP

Phone Numbers:

Drug Testing Daily Drop Line	314-992-0858
Case Manager's Supervisor.....	314-340-7268
Drug Court Office	314-622-4924
Public Defender's Office.....	314-340-7625
Circuit Attorney's Office	314-622-4941

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